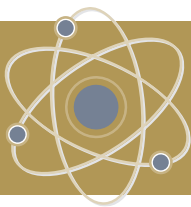


Cool Again: American Rambler

Once out of fashion, now a collector’s item



RAMBLER, TRADITIONAL, RANCH AND contemporary are some names used to describe housing that swept the nation after World War II. Quicker and less expensive to build for the flood of returning GIs, and well suited to postwar optimism about the future, ramblers seemed to sprout up overnight. More than 12,000 ramblers were built in Bloomington, approximately half of the city’s housing stock.

With roots in the 1850s adobe ranchos of the West, ramblers are often simple rectangular or L- or U-shaped houses. Architectural features include flat, gable, hipped or butterfly roofs; an open floor plan; wood frame construction and large windows that bring in abundant light. Many ramblers were built with traditional details, such as hardwood floors, double-hung windows and simple moldings.

LEARN MORE ABOUT RAMBLERS



Michelle Gringeri-Brown and Jim Brown formerly lived in Edina in a postwar rambler.

They publish *Atomic Ranch*, a quarterly magazine devoted to mid-century homes. For information, visit www.atomic-ranch.com.

Materials were modern – aluminum windows, laminate surfacing, and basements or slabs. But much like Victorians and bungalows before them, ramblers fell out of favor. During the past 20 years they have been dismissed as boring and something to be remodeled or razed.

Now a new generation is discovering the great qualities of these homes, along with baby boomers who may have grown up in them and are rediscovering their livable and lovable characteristics.

Craig Kellman and Christine Griswold live in a 1956 split-level rambler. The living room has a flagstone fireplace wall, oak floors and built-in lighting soffits that might make another homeowner think of furnishing with overstuffed traditional pieces and area rugs. This young couple had other ideas. They furnished the living room with vintage items: a bright orange couch and two Danish modern chairs from a mid-century store and several Heywood-Wakefield tables from a local flea market.

The couple found the house cloaked in salmon-color paint and floral wallpaper, and in need of asbestos abatement and new plumbing, electrical and HVAC systems. The 2,600-square-foot house has two bedrooms



and a bath at the top of a short flight of stairs, with the master bedroom and another bath a few steps above that. The former built-in carport was annexed by previous owners as a fourth bedroom and is now an office for Kellman, an animator.

“There was a focus on the future in so much of the art and architecture of that period,” Kellman says about the 1950s Disneyland posters and vintage toys he collects. “It was really optimistic and hopeful. I think there’s a similar comforting nostalgia when I look at good mid-century animation and good mid-century architecture.”



Bloomington has many styles of ramblers. This is one example.

Have you remodeled your rambler? If you would like to be featured in this series on ramblers in Bloomington, call Diann Kirby at 952-563-8818 or e-mail dkirby@ci.bloomington.mn.us.

Up to Code

Rental Property in Bloomington

TWO PERCENT OF ALL SINGLE-FAMILY homes in Bloomington are rented. To avoid nuisances to adjoining property owners, the City licenses and inspects rental properties annually to ensure that buildings and grounds are maintained.

Property owners play an important role in keeping rental properties up to code. Responsibilities include:

- All rental property must be licensed annually. The property owner must complete an application and pay an annual fee of \$78.50.
- A single-family dwelling cannot be rented to more than four unrelated

individuals, more than one family (persons related by blood, marriage or adoption, including foster children) or more than two roomers if the dwelling is owner-occupied.

- The number of vehicles parked at a home is limited to the number of people with driver’s licenses plus one.
- Waste, debris and refuse must be kept in an enclosed container no more than five feet in front of the dwelling. Refuse and recycling must be removed from the property weekly.
- Excessive noise is considered a public nuisance and prohibited under the City’s noise ordinance.

- Grass and weeds must be cut before they reach one foot high.
- Dwellings operated as group homes with four or more persons are regulated under state and county laws. The City conducts exterior inspections of these properties.

For more information, call Environmental Health Program Coordinator Mark Stangenes at 952-563-8980.

For information on the Bloomington Rental Collaborative for rental property owners, call Kathy Warren at 952-563-8942.

Improving Water Quality and Clarity

Aquatic Vegetation in Normandale Lake

BLOOMINGTON’S LAKES AND PONDS ARE a source of pride and beauty for the entire community. The City has practices and policies to improve water quality and preserve beneficial uses of wetlands including recreation and wildlife habitat.

An exotic floating plant, curly leaf pondweed, has proliferated in Normandale Lake at 84th Street and Normandale Boulevard. The plant covers the open water in early spring; it dies and decays in mid-summer, creating ideal conditions for algae blooms.

One way to control curly leaf pondweed is to apply herbicides to all or nearly all of the water body. However, City permits from the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) restrict the use of herbicides to less than 15 percent of the lake’s surface. As a result, Normandale Lake is often covered by a green mat of weeds or algae.

The Nine Mile Creek Watershed District has prepared a report to determine appropriate measures that will meet water quality goals and improve the recreational use of Normandale Lake. The District, City and ACOE are reevaluating the conditions of the permit and exploring other options for improving the lake’s water quality. The District, City, ACOE and DNR intend to identify measures that will control excess weed and algae growth.

For more information, call Jeff Luedeman at 952-563-8977.

Shoreline Buffer Zones

A Natural Environment Improves Water Quality



The primary cause of increased aquatic weed growth is excess nutrient flow into wetlands. Reducing this flow is an effective way to improve overall water quality. Where feasible, the City maintains 10- to 20-foot strips of unmown vegetation along the shorelines of lakes and ponds. These buffer strips filter storm water runoff, capturing nutrients and other pollutants before they enter the water. A natural environment around wetlands provides a habitat for wildlife and the deep root mats of plants stabilize the shoreline and reduce erosion.